

for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to the drawings be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully note that the effective date of Rider (filed June 1, 1999) is after the filing date of the foreign application to which the present application claims priority (May 27, 1999). A certified English translation of the priority document was submitted with the Amendment filed June 4, 2002. Thus, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been overcome.

Consequently, in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted ,



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher D. Ward".

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